

# STANLIB enables remote working on Nutanix infrastructure foundation

Mitigating the impact of lockdown restrictions, STANLIB reinvents its IT environment by cutting out business downtime and leveraging Nutanix to manage all business-critical applications

South African financial services company STANLIB has partnered with Nutanix for additional nodes that enable the organisation to provide virtual desktops to employees that have been required to work from home during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in the country. This builds on its existing Nutanix infrastructure that has supported STANLIB in its move to embrace the cloud. Overall, STANLIB has improved its IT systems that now provide it with the scalable processing capabilities required to meet all its future needs.

Nutanix and its infrastructure partner iOCO initially implemented six Nutanix units that subsequently expanded to 20 that eliminated business outages while improving system stability and scalability. However, the organisation wanted to expand on this environment to securely run its Citrix hosted shared desktops in its datacentre, allowing employees to access their application from any device.

## CUSTOMER

STANLIB is a multi-specialist asset manager that connects retail and institutional clients with multiple investment opportunities across asset classes and markets. Today, STANLIB manages and administers over R593 billion (USD 45.4 billion as of 30 June 2017) for more than 500,000 retail and institutional clients. The company operates in nine African countries, and in key developed markets globally.

## INDUSTRY

Financial Services

## BENEFITS

- No downtime
- Better resource allocation
- Time to business now minutes
- Peace of mind
- Business efficiency
- Secure remote working capabilities

## SOLUTION

- Nutanix XC740 nodes running the Ultimate Acropolis Software Edition including Prism Central and Citrix Hosted Shared Desktops

## BUSINESS NEEDS

- Create a stable, flexible IT infrastructure for business-critical apps and enable employees to work remotely

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## AN EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT

However, the lockdown restrictions in South Africa resulted in STANLIB needing to find an effective solution that would enable its employees to access their applications while working from home securely.

The Level 5 lockdown that was implemented in March and ran through to the end of April saw most companies having to temporarily close. However, being in the financial services sector required STANLIB to maintain trading conditions while prioritising the safety of its employees.

“Fortunately, having just completed a significant Nutanix roll out, which has seen 95% of STANLIB’s production environment being run on the Nutanix platform. We did not have to reinvent the wheel but rather identify how best to introduce new nodes to expand on our current capability. Ease of use and scalability were key considerations. Additionally, the ability to run Citrix as securely as possible given the governance requirements around data management had to be ensured throughout the process,” says Dipesh Nagar at STANLIB.

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## SOLUTION

With Citrix being a group standard across STANLIB, the Nutanix environment had to enable users to have millisecond access to their applications. Guaranteed performance was a business priority.

One of the advantages of the Nutanix infrastructure is that STANLIB would be able to expand on its existing enterprise cloud environment which it uses for key business applications to deliver these to its work from home users.

This would ensure scaling out of the existing private Nutanix cloud of STANLIB would be a straightforward process to handle the additional workload requirements. Furthermore, it did not have to invest significant resources on new equipment. Essentially, STANLIB could repurpose the hardware it already had in place for Citrix Hosted Shared Desktops and a remote work offering.

Subsequently, STANLIB has grown its 20 node Nutanix environment to now encompass 26 nodes still running Acropolis Ultimate Edition including Prism Central while now also having Citrix solutions in place.

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## BENEFITS

Leveraging Nutanix with Citrix Hosted Shared Desktops ensures employees can securely access their work desktop environments from anywhere they have an internet connection. This positions STANLIB to give users the flexibility and confidence to remain operational throughout the lockdown restrictions and beyond.

“It is as much about adhering to governance requirements as it is about a quality experience for our employees. In turn, this enables STANLIB to deliver high-quality customer service irrespective of what is happening in terms of the lockdown,” adds Nagar.

Irrespective of whether a remote worker accesses the STANLIB environment from a desktop, laptop or tablet, Nutanix and Citrix deliver the response times required to remain as productive as possible with no impact on the employee experience.

With this new Nutanix project, STANLIB has not only expanded the reliability of its existing IT environment, but it has delivered high availability features to employees who can remain operational regardless of the operating conditions in the country,” adds Nagar.

The advantages of being able to access VDI infrastructure are significant. Not only does this result in a simplified IT environment, but it also increases security that is mission critical for STANLIB. Employees can

remain productive wherever they are and can still access essential information, products, and services from the datacentre just as if they were sitting in the office.

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## LOOKING AHEAD

While it is difficult to predict what the future work environment will look like once we have moved past the COVID-19 pandemic, using Nutanix has given STANLIB the peace of mind we need that we can reliably and securely meet any requirement. The scalability of the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform make future growth virtually limitless, and we can plan for any scenario while still delivering the business continuity and disaster recovery aspects so essential for the financial services market,” says Nagar.

Considering how access to sensitive data has become a target for increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks, being able to leverage Citrix in a high available Nutanix environment enables STANLIB to provide the right level of access based on each employee’s location, device, and a number of other factors.

“Nutanix has positioned us strongly to evolve as the world changes and to be able to meet any changes in an agile manner,” concludes Nagar.



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